

Ethics in the Noble Quran

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Praise be to Allah, and prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his family and companions.

Introduction

My wish has been, ever since I became acquainted with the Book of Allah the Almighty and its wisdom seeped into my mind, its fragrance into my heart, and its style into my conduct and pen, to write something on the subject I have chosen as the title of this research: "Ethics in the Noble Quran."

When the Quran was revealed to the Chosen Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Arabs were characterized by morals that intertwined ancient, barren, dark ignorance with established but worn-out customs. Their character was formed from what they were naturally disposed to from two sources: their desert Bedouin nature on one hand, and what descended to them from the heritage of Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them) on the other. Thus they possessed much of noble character, chivalry, hospitality, and refusal to accept humiliation, but they also had many moral defects, such as burying daughters alive, widespread adultery, wine, and usury.

This moral mixture, with its bumps and lumps, was among the reasons for the Lord of the Worlds' choice of that nation—lost at that time, magnificent afterward—for His final message, and His choice of the Chosen Messenger of Allah ﷺ for the final message within it.

It has been reported from the righteous predecessors that "the latter part of this nation will only be reformed by what reformed its earlier part." This is one of the most truthful statements made about the nation of Muhammad ﷺ. The nature of this nation, whose predecessors lived, and whose successors still live, in a dry desert atmosphere whose vast land forms its entirety, with some maritime outlets surrounding it, then two main rivers—the Nile and Euphrates—gave this nation certain characteristics in terms of psychological formation and social structure. These two matters—psychological formation and social structure—are the components of customs and morals, insofar as customs are the social character that all people in a specific environment agree upon to be acceptable character for everyone, whose violation attracts attention with disgust and rejection.

The Noble Quran has pointed to the effect of environment on physical and moral formation, and what people conventionally agree upon, whether elevated or base. Allah the Almighty said regarding the Children of Israel: "And when you said, 'O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions.' [Moses] said, 'Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked.' And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from

Allah..." (Al-Baqarah 61). The Children of Israel had become accustomed to eating inferior food, so they could not be patient with the superior food, and thus their morals were shaped by this inferiority, which became a cause for their behavior that brought humiliation and poverty upon them. Ibn Khaldun pointed to the effect of environment on the physical and moral formation of human beings in his great book "The Introduction of Ibn Khaldun."

Individual character is the product of interaction between individual personality and the social customs and norms that form social character.

The Noble Quran came with the best that individual character can be, and the best that social custom should be, knowing that Allah the Almighty knows that relationship we mentioned, and He combined them in the best harmony that removes contradiction and puts the principle of mutual pushing and pulling in its proper place. While we see secular civilizations pride themselves on making individual behavior absolute without restriction or limitation, while they constrained society with constraints it cannot transgress, through the strictness of man-made laws.

The Nature of Ethics

Character (khuluq) is the nature that adheres to man in all his states in any area of behavior. Allah the Almighty made it part of the sound human nature (fitrah) in some of its aspects, though the scale's balance in moderation sometimes tilts toward excess and sometimes toward deficiency, in a fluctuating or permanent manner, according to the individual's nature. Philosophers define it with many definitions, among the closest to correctness is what Jean-Jacques Rousseau said: that it is the faculty that makes us distinguish good from evil and what benefits us as individuals and groups.

As for social ethics, or customs, they are the product of the mixing of individuals and the generation of convictions, century after century, after nature created them, then reason supported them, they settled in consciousness, and the divine messages descended with their correct standards in their moderation. There is no doubt that this social character is composed of the character of its individuals, which they agree upon, to become the meaning of "culture," which can be defined as "the similar behaviors that members of society perform without being conscious of them."

The Noble Quran established the foundations of ethics, clarified them, and balanced their aspects—benefits and harms—so it inclined them toward mercy in its place, toward firmness in its place, and toward noble moderation in most cases, thus being a guide and director for sound nature.

The Quran is full of precious moral and educational guidance. How could it not be, when Allah the Almighty said: "Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?" (Al-Mulk 14). He the Almighty knows what benefits us and what corrupts us, as individuals and groups.

These guidances come in two frameworks:

First: Direct, explicit text in moral guidance, such as "And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height" (Al-Isra 37).

Second: Indirect guidance, through the indication of the situation or scene in general, as in the position of Moses (peace be upon him) with Pharaoh: "And We had already given Moses nine clear signs, so ask the Children of Israel [about] when he came to them and Pharaoh said to him, 'Indeed I think, O Moses, that you are affected by magic.' [Moses] said, 'You have already known that none has sent down these [signs] except the Lord of the heavens and the earth as evidence, and indeed I think, O Pharaoh, that you are destroyed'" (Al-Isra 101-102), in terms of the method of responding to the opponent, which is widespread in the Quran in many places.

The wisdom of the Quran and its guidance to humanity in noble moral dealings is most worthy of consideration, investigation, and educational adoption, if we want to lift from ourselves the humiliation of degradation, shame, and poor manners that have become the plague of plagues in our peoples in general. Those who love to spread indecency know perfectly well that its consequence is moral collapse followed by social breakdown.

(1) The Bouquet of Surat Al-Isra

Cosmic Laws and Moral Treasures in Surat Al-Isra

We will first look at a chapter that carries treasures of moral guidance, following one another in succession that takes one's breath away and renders the tongue speechless, with a form of the highest forms of eloquence—Surat Al-Isra. We notice that its verses came of the first type, explicit in their meaning.

Allah the Almighty said in Surat Al-Isra:

"Whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul. And whoever goes astray only goes astray [in detriment] against it. And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And We were not to punish until We sent a messenger. And when We intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent but they defiantly disobey therein; so the word comes into effect upon it, and We destroy it with [complete] destruction. And how many of the generations have We destroyed after Noah. And sufficient is your Lord, concerning the sins of His servants, as Acquainted and Seeing. Do not make [as equal] with Allah another deity and [thereby] become censured and forsaken. And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], 'uff,' and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.' Your Lord is most knowing of what is within yourselves. If you are righteous, then indeed He is ever, to the often returning [to Him], Forgiving. And give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful. And if you

[must] turn away from the needy awaiting mercy from your Lord which you expect, then speak to them a gentle word. And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent. Indeed, your Lord extends provision for whom He wills and restricts [it]. Indeed He is ever, concerning His servants, Acquainted and Seeing. And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin. And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]. And do not approach the property of an orphan, except in the way that is best, until he reaches maturity. And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned. And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best [way] and best in result. And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned. And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height. All that - its evil is ever, in the sight of your Lord, detested. That is from what your Lord has revealed to you of wisdom. And do not make with Allah another deity, lest you be thrown into Hell, blamed and banished." (Al-Isra)

Allah the Almighty began by establishing universal principles, legal constants, and cosmic laws, clarifying through them the relationship of the person to his deeds and the deeds of others, and His blessing upon humanity by guiding them with books and messengers as bearers of good tidings and warners, before directing them to what constitutes good deeds and noble character.

"Whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul. And whoever goes astray only goes astray [in detriment] against it."

This is an earth-shaking beginning containing guidance and warning, and it contains one of the most important doctrinal and moral foundations in the Islamic system. This is because your guidance or misguidance—their fruits are exclusively for you alone, no father, son, or relative benefits from them, except one who takes your guidance as an example to follow, nothing more. As for guidance itself, it is neither inherited nor transferable in ownership. This harmonizes with His saying before it by verses: "If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it] to yourselves." It contains great significance that the servant chooses for himself either to go astray or to be wretched, which is the requirement of legal will and the justification for sending down messengers and books. Allah the Almighty said: "And that there is nothing for man except what he strives for" (An-Najm 39), which has the same meaning.

"And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another."

This, once again, is one of the great doctrines that Allah the Almighty mentions to establish in the Muslim's soul that his work, which will come later in the subsequent verses, is for him and not for others, and that he will not bear anyone's consequences, nor will anyone bear his consequences.

Your false deed, your disobedience, and your burden will not have their consequences lifted from you by a father, family, or tribe. Therefore, those who said, "And those who disbelieve say to those who believe, 'Follow our way, and we will carry your sins.' But they will not carry anything of their sins. Indeed, they are liars" (Al-Ankabut 12) went astray—they lied to them and led them astray.

The law of "no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" refutes the nonsense of Christians who claim Christ Jesus sacrificed himself for humanity's salvation and to erase what they call "original sin." Neither Adam's sin (peace be upon him) harms the righteous or the wicked among his children, nor is Christ (peace be upon him) able to erase any human being's sin.

All people will bear their burdens on the Day of Judgment, including the burdens of those they caused to go astray, since their misguidance is part of their own misguidance in the first place, and the consequences of deeds are considered part of them, which the scholar considers in determining the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the deed. Allah the Almighty established this in His saying: "Indeed, it is We who bring the dead to life and record what they have put forth and what they left behind, and all things We have enumerated in a clear record" (Ya-Sin 12). "What they left behind" refers to what resulted from their evil deeds in terms of misguidance and leading others astray.

"And We were not to punish until We sent a messenger."

Yes, Allah's mercy to His servants is that He does not punish them until the message reaches them that denying it constitutes disbelief, even though Allah blessed human beings with reason capable of independent observation and sound nature upon which every newborn is born until his parents turn him away from the truth. Allah fulfilled His promise and sent messengers to all people as bearers of good tidings and warners: "And there was no nation but that there had passed within it a warner" (Fatir 24), "And We certainly sent among every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid Taghut'" (An-Nahl 36). All of these are emphasized, exclusive, general formulas that do not allow for specification, as the above verse is informative, not constructive, and the difference is significant.

This legal universal principle has been the subject of extensive, branching discussion in creed, principles, and jurisprudence. I don't think its place is in our discussion here, but the purpose is for the Muslim to see the breadth of Allah's forgiveness, mercy, and desire for good for people. He the Almighty did not create us in vain: "Had We intended to take a diversion, We could have taken it from [what is] with Us - if [indeed] We were to do so" (Al-Anbiya 17), and He did not leave us without guidance: "Does man think that he will be left neglected?" (Al-Qiyamah 36). The purpose of creation is stated: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Adh-Dhariyat 56). The Creator, glorified and exalted, necessarily possesses all attributes of perfection, and if there were any deficiency in Him—God forbid—He would not be the true Lord and the deity deserving worship. Among His perfect attributes are wisdom, mercy, and justice. Wisdom leads to the reason for creating creation, mercy leads to caring for and looking after them, and this is only completed through the concept of prophethood, and hence sending messengers and revealing books, to guide to the right path and establish the proof, so none enters

the Fire except those upon whom the word has come to pass through their wronging themselves and rejecting the divine laws.

"And when We intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent but they defiantly disobey therein; so the word comes into effect upon it, and We destroy it with [complete] destruction."

Glory be to Allah the Great. This is Allah's law for the earlier and later peoples: that luxury is coupled with transgression, and hence with destruction. Transgression only comes through it. Look around you and travel through the layers of history—you will find luxury a direct cause in the fall of nations and civilizations. This happened to the nation of Greece, then to the nations of Rome and Persia at the hands of Muslims, then to the Muslim nation when they abandoned their divine heritage for vile secularism and base pleasures, so destruction came to them from every side.

The affluent are usually the rulers and their entourage. A narration came with emphasis on the meem in "ammarnahum" meaning "We made them rulers and leaders," and reality is the best witness and clearest evidence of the consistency of this precise law, without flattery or favoritism.

The word "We intend" refers to Allah's cosmic will, from whose knowledge nothing escapes, and without which no matter proceeds. It is not about compulsion but about knowledge and dominion. Likewise in His saying "We command"—the command here means permission for the laws to take their course without divine intervention. A number of commentators mentioned that the command here is the legal command requiring obedience, so when they transgressed, the law applied to them and Allah destroyed them completely. There is no contradiction in the result, though the disagreement here is whether the command is cosmic or legal. The most appropriate view is that it is cosmic in the sense of permission.

His saying "so the word comes into effect upon it" does not mean injustice and stubbornness, but means the application of the law that preceded in Allah's book and His cosmic will. Notice His saying "with [complete] destruction"—He brought the infinitive to reflect comprehensive, devastating destruction after which no nation can rise again. Consider 'Ad, Thamud, the people of Midian, Al-Mu'tafikah, the people of Lot, and the companions of the thicket—few among many. What a warning, what a guiding verse and comprehensive wisdom.

"And how many of the generations have We destroyed after Noah. And sufficient is your Lord, concerning the sins of His servants, as Acquainted and Seeing."

Then Allah the Almighty concludes this rare bouquet of noble wisdoms and cosmic laws by drawing attention to what happened through their application, without stopping, throughout time and across space. How many are those nations and civilizations that lived over successive centuries after Noah (peace be upon him) until the time of Quranic revelation, indicating what came as warnings before them in the previous decisive verses. The generations here may refer to the nations themselves, as in the authentic hadith: "The best of generations is my generation, then

those who follow them, then those who follow them" (Bukhari and in another narration, "the best of people"). A generation is the time period or those who lived in it—it's the same.

Then He concluded with the wise establishment of One who is knowledgeable, expert, acquainted, and seeing, that Allah the Almighty has experienced those sins and seen them, known them, and recorded them in His preserved tablet. This suffices to be a deterrent for human beings, that every sin they commit is calculated and monitored against them, so there is no room for denial or excuse. Allah is our support.

Moral Guidance

"Do not make [as equal] with Allah another deity and [thereby] become censured and forsaken."

Allah the Almighty began the series of moral guidance with its highest ranks and most sublime meanings of attachment: monotheism and not associating partners with Allah. Is there any rank higher than this that makes man rise above all creatures, even angels?

Whoever makes another deity with Allah means that all moral corruptions have gathered in him: ignorance and arrogance, denial and haughtiness. Allah did not mention those vices in the polytheist himself, but mentioned some of their consequences upon him: "censured and forsaken"—censured in this world for the worst qualities he possesses, the highest of which is disbelief, then followed by the degradation that follows him in every aspect of humanity. If some virtue appears in him, it is from the remnants of the nature that Allah granted him, which he betrayed, so it became ineffective.

And forsaken in the Hereafter, for who will help one whom Allah has forsaken? On a day when there is no helper except Him, and no salvation except by Him and to Him? A day when he will plead to Allah to return him once more, but he will be forsaken in his request. A day when he will plead to Malik to ask his Lord to end his life, but he will be forsaken. A day when he will bite his hands and wish he were dust, but he will be forsaken and taste the punishment. What forsaking is greater than this forsaking?

"And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment..."

Then came the second moral guidance from Allah the Almighty in this precious constellation, honoring those whom Allah made a direct cause in the existence of every human being on earth: the parents. Allah the Almighty linked between worshipping Allah, who was good to humanity by guiding them to worship Him alone without partners, and being good to parents, who took care of his upbringing, nurturing, feeding, providing clothing, shelter, and protection from heat and cold, staying up with eyes that neither tire nor weary, every moment of his life, until he reached his strength and maturity. The deed of parents is part of the overflow of Allah's kindness to people. Whoever is ungrateful and disobedient to them has been ungrateful for one of Allah's greatest blessings upon him.

But time passes, conditions change, the carer becomes in need of care, and parents reach old age, becoming frail and aged: "And whoever We grant long life, We reverse in creation; so will they not understand?" (Ya-Sin 68). It is from Allah's cosmic decree that man progresses through life's journey, exchanging strength for weakness, then weakness and gray hair for strength: "Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair" (Ar-Rum 54). What did Allah the Almighty command the Muslim to do toward parents in this critical period of reaching old age and incapacity? He commanded him with brief, simple speech: not to say to them "uff"! Allah the Almighty knows the reality that elderly people cannot tolerate much and do not have patience for their needs as they had in their time of strength, so you find them getting tired, arguing, saying and repeating and adding. Here comes the "uff." Here appears patience with their condition, as they were patient with you when you were an infant who could not be patient with hunger. Here comes the time to return the favor. Naturally, whoever forbade saying a two-letter word "uff" to them has forbidden, by priority, saying anything greater to them, let alone doing any neglect, avoidance, turning away, or scolding to them. Rather, the duty toward them, if they behave this way in their old age while under your care, is to speak to them with all mercy and make them feel all dignity, not that you remind them of your help and care for them. Hence Allah said: "and speak to them a noble word"...

This meaning was repeated in Surat Al-Baqarah: "And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], 'Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good'" (83), but the scene there was directed to the Children of Israel and their turning away from what Allah commanded them, which are the same guidances and rulings that the Quran brought in Surat Al-Isra, which is Meccan. This repetition confirms the oneness of the Sender and the correspondence of the messages, and provides believers, after directing them in Mecca to their obligations, not to take the matter lightly and carelessly, for the same came before to the Children of Israel and they turned away, so Allah became angry with them, cursed them, and prepared for them a great punishment.

"And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.'"

Glory be to Allah for the Quranic expression! Lowering the wing in Arabic is an expression of humility, as a bird descends humbly, meaning "lowering" to the ground from height, so it lowers its wing. It is a metaphor for humility. But the wing here is not just humility, but the wing of humiliation, which is greater lowering of the soul's status than mere humility. Because it is humiliation before a precious one who deserves it, who gave before taking, indeed without waiting to take, it is humiliation emerging from mercy and coming with mercy, so this unique, beloved type of humiliation is embodied in that mercy for parents in their hour of need and difficulty.

Because you, no matter what strength, wealth, and capabilities you have been given, there is what you cannot bring or repel. Here comes the role of supplication, for mercy, which is the cause of what they gave to you first, and what your Lord commanded you to lower the wing of humility from mercy to them. So you call upon Him to give them from His mercy what you and no one else in your world cannot provide. You pray: "Have mercy on them, my Lord, in return

for the favor of their kindness, good treatment, and broad mercy to me." O Allah, have mercy on my parents and all the deceased Muslims.

"Your Lord is most knowing of what is within yourselves. If you are righteous, then indeed He is ever, to the often returning [to Him], Forgiving."

Then comes the news of certainty, which is that Allah knows what is in souls, indeed He knows better than you what is in your soul. Therefore, He did not say "your Lord knows" but Allah the Almighty said "your Lord is most knowing," which is the "af'al" form established for more than the meaning of the letters that form the present verb "knows." The form returned here to the plural form, as it departed from the individual, specific form that expressed that paternal relationship between the person and his parents, which has the momentum of personalization and individual impact, so it does not get lost in the crowd of the group.

So you, if you are righteous, know what you have and what you owe, regarding what preceded, from worshipping Allah alone first, and lowering the wing to parents out of mercy for them, then all that follows from fulfilling the covenant to Allah and to parents especially. Indeed, Allah the Almighty is forgiving for what has passed, pardoning what has occurred, if the return is sincere and the repentance is genuine.

"And give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully."

The mention of kinship and their rights here is from the category of "one thing reminds of another," as most commentators said. After the enjoining of parents' rights was completed, came the mention of relatives, then orphans, then the poor. The right of these is what comforts them and meets their needs, without bequest. Here comes the observation that poor relatives who are orphans take precedence over relatives, and poor orphaned relatives are more deserving than poor relatives who are orphans, and poor orphans are more deserving than other orphans. This is the requirement of the order in the verse, and it is reasonable and understood, for whoever has all three descriptions is more deserving than one who has two descriptions.

"Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful."

This verse is not connected to the verse preceding it regarding the rights of the three mentioned categories, for how can one who gives each rightful person his right be wasteful, even if he spends all his money on this? The verse here is connected to the verse "And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him," so it is resumed.

Wastefulness is spending money in the wrong place or with more than necessary in its amount, and both are wastefulness. What is noticeable here in the verse is that it came with the infinitive form of emphasis, as Allah the Almighty said "and do not spend wastefully [tadhiran]." This is from the greatness of Whose speech this is. Avoiding wastefulness with a little excess here and there is impossible for people in every situation and throughout life's continuity. So Allah the Almighty overlooked little spontaneous wastefulness, since wastefulness is a relative matter that

is not controlled in the first place, and it resembles what came in jurisprudential matters in terms of overlooking little uncertainty for its lack of control first, and for the excessive hardship on the obligated in achieving it, as in the amount of water used in old bathrooms.

A person knows wastefulness in himself if he is wasteful. Spending what you don't own on what you don't need is the worst type of wastefulness in its modern forms using credit cards.

Allah the Almighty has favored some people over others in provision, but the differences between rich and poor should not appear in wastefulness, rather all people should maintain a moderate middle ground, even if there are differences in living standards naturally and undoubtedly. But it is not right for the matter to reach the two extremes: excessive luxury and grinding poverty. That class living in palaces today was not known in the time of the Companions, despite the vast wealth of some of them like Uthman and Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with them. This is a class that emerged in Islamic society under the greed and savagery of governors, the absence of piety, and money flowing from underground. It appeared and grew in Europe since the days of the Church and its control and the rule of the Lords, then under capitalism and communism alike.

The hatred of wastefulness reached the point that the wasteful person was paired with Satan, for they are brothers in departing from the truth and putting things in their wrong place. Just as Satan puts falsehood in place of truth, the wasteful person puts his money where it is not intended. Then Allah the Almighty reminds that Satan is ungrateful to Allah, so likewise by analogy the wasteful person is ungrateful for Allah's blessing.

"And if you [must] turn away from the needy awaiting mercy from your Lord which you expect, then speak to them a gentle word."

Then the Quranic speech returns to the context of dealing with relatives, orphans, and the poor. Giving them their due is a blessing and favor, but if this becomes impossible, truly not as a claim, and in expectation of what Allah may bring of mercy for you and them—since Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity—do not turn them away with harsh or humiliating rejection, but dismiss them from you with generous, easy words that do not bring humiliation or disdain. This is from the peak of Quranic moral guidance in terms of considering others' feelings and sensitivity in dealing with them, especially when they are in need, which is the weakest of times for human beings.

"And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent."

The Quran moves between multiple issues with beginning and return, with unparalleled eloquence and fluency, preventing boredom, stimulating thought, and establishing meaning. The context returns once again to the subject of wastefulness, correcting the view, determining the middle ground, and straightening thought in the matter of spending.

Look at that scene drawn by the words! A man whose hands have been chained with shackles to his neck, so he is unable to perform, like a slave shackled with iron. That is the reality of miserliness and the miser: slavery and enslavement, but to money instead of Allah.

But at the same time, the despicable wastefulness that Allah the Almighty warned against earlier is not right. He portrayed it here with a sensory image, as He did with stinginess—the image of one whose hand is extended with everything he has, all the time, not keeping anything in reserve for the unknown future. Whoever does this remains blamed by himself and those he supports, and remorseful about what his situation has come to, needing to be the lower hand instead of the upper hand. The same meaning is mentioned in another place in the Quran, and the scene changed, in Surat Al-Furqan: "And [they are] those who, when they spend, do neither waste nor are stingy but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate" (67), where that guidance came there in the context of mixing moral guidances with worship guidances, so worship guidance dominated the place there in Al-Furqan, and moral guidance dominated the place here in Al-Isra.

These two places establish a strong foundation by which we distinguish between the person of worship and the person of character. One does not necessarily follow from the other. But if Allah the Almighty had not mixed worship with character, some would think that character suffices, as we often hear from the ignorant of our people.

If it is said, but we saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his purified wives and many of the following Companions do this, not keeping anything in their homes for tomorrow, and they are praised for this? We say that obligation is different from honor. Allah the Almighty does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. Quranic obligations do not come for the rare among people, but for the overwhelming majority, and the foremost remain a point of aspiration for others, not a general obligation that would cause overwhelming difficulty in performance.

"Indeed, your Lord extends provision for whom He wills and restricts [it]. Indeed He is ever, concerning His servants, Acquainted and Seeing."

This wastefulness and stinginess have no necessity in the divine reality, for Allah the Almighty is the owner of provision and its giver, none other than Him. Whoever wastes has wasted a right that was supposed to go to the needy, and whoever is stingy has withheld rights from their owners from his money. Neither of them is one who provided the money they wasted or were stingy with. Their action will not cause the destruction of others, except whom Allah wills, for He is the Restrainer and Extender of provision and life, and He is the Expert in their condition with expertise, Seeing them, not from reports about them.

"And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin."

Then, as one thing reminds of another, Allah presents one of the most abhorrent forms of disbelief in the previous verse "Indeed, your Lord extends provision for whom He wills and restricts [it]"—which is fearing the loss of money that Allah granted him in the first place if a newborn comes who will eat from his wealth! How abhorrent is this cowardly, petty soul. This

newborn is in itself generous provision, renewed life, and abundant blessing, which he rejects, indeed kills, through abortion or otherwise, out of fear of poverty.

The Quran used the word "kill" to emphasize the enormity of the crime, as it is, from one perspective: killing the newborn by preventing the opportunity of life from him. But does this mean that every abortion is forbidden? The answer is no. The reprehensible quality of killing came in the context of the restriction of fearing poverty. But if there is a reason, such as fear for the woman's life or similar social situations that are evaluated individually, Allah has made this religion easy. But the basic principle of abortion remains disliked, like withdrawal. It can be forbidden, as when the soul has entered, or permissible or obligatory according to the considered context.

"And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way."

Then the Quran continues the journey of advice in directing the source of the newborn and the necessity of preserving his lineage by avoiding an indecency that is among the major sins counted in the Quran: the major sin of adultery.

Adultery is intercourse with a woman who is not lawful for the man, neither by marriage nor by ownership of the right hand. This deed is among the most causes of the ruin and corruption of societies and the spread of transgression in them. Allah made it a cause of this ruin and a reason for it.

Adultery means the mixing of lineages, betrayal of the husband or wife or guardian, enjoying the forbidden and delighting in it from other than its proper door, humiliation of the woman, and much more of social corruptions.

Then, who would his soul tempt him to such a foul deed, especially among the married men and women? A man who has a wife who dwells in his house and is lawful for him whenever he wishes—if she refuses or is unable, he may have three others in the lawful. What drives him to such a disgusting act? And a woman who has a husband who shelters her and gives her her right—if he is unable or refuses, she has divorce or khula. Therefore, the punishment for married men and women is death, no less. Islam considers social interest above individual interest and makes retribution proportionate to the corruption itself and its effect as well. Therefore Allah said "and is evil as a way" in that whoever walks in its path, his fate becomes evil and his worth falls.

Due to the danger of this act, Allah warned against even approaching it and doing what might lead to it, blocking its means, such as mixing, kissing, touching, unjustified conversation, and being too familiar with non-relatives. How many of these means have led to falling into adultery itself, except those whom Allah protected.

"And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not

exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]."

The soul here is general, referring to every soul, whatever its religion, except by right. The exception here came for the jurist to apply through specification to that generality in all its conditions. A Muslim is not killed except in three cases, as came in the hadith from Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The blood of a Muslim man who testifies that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah is not lawful except in one of three cases: the married person who commits adultery, a life for a life, and one who leaves his religion and abandons the community" (Bukhari and Muslim). The married person here refers to both men and women. A life for a life means the intentional killer, and leaving religion is apostasy from Islam, and leaving the community is an apparent sign of apostasy, not a condition for it. The wisdom in this is that leaving the truth after knowing it with certainty and manifesting enmity and opposition to it indicates corruption deeply rooted in nature in the worst form of corruption. Whoever is in this condition cannot be trusted and does not deserve to be left to help others do the same deed and be a place for Satan's infiltration into people's souls. Secular governments impose the death penalty for committing high treason, so what about betraying Allah and His Messenger ﷺ! As for the verse "There shall be no compulsion in religion," it is correct and applicable, but with the condition that "the right course has become clear from the wrong." If Muslims prevail over a place and overthrow the rule of the tyrant who prevents people from seeing the truth with his media and tricks night and day, then whoever wants to become Muslim has been guided, and whoever wants to remain Christian or Jewish is not forced otherwise, since faith is connected to the work of the heart and limbs. If the work of the heart is absent, there is no faith. What benefit is there in compulsion then? As for others besides the People of the Book, it is Islam or the sword.

As for the People of the Book, the combatant is killed, not the one under treaty or the dhimmi, so killing them both is forbidden, with disagreement about the punishment for their killer.

Justice here, for one who is killed unjustly—meaning he was not from those three categories—the blood relatives have the authority, meaning the right, for the ruler to adhere to the principle of a life for a life, without aggression. Justice is achieved by killing the killer without addition, so no mutilation or aggression against family or property, as Allah said "whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you," so equivalence is the scale of justice.

"And do not approach the property of an orphan, except in the way that is best, until he reaches maturity."

Then the context returns once again to preserving people's wealth and rights. Just as it established preserving the rights of the rightful, here it warns whoever has the authority to dispose of the orphan's property, indeed from even approaching it, to be more cautious, except for what is necessary to maintain support and care for the orphan's interest, without aggression or transgression. The guardianship ends when the orphan reaches maturity and shows the ability to act with awareness and sound judgment.

"And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned."

This verse deserves contemplation from every Muslim to see what treasures and sublime wisdoms it contains.

His saying "And fulfill [every] commitment" contains all noble character and good conduct that makes its possessor generous in this world, honored and connected in the Hereafter. For a person to fulfill his commitment is to fulfill his obligations toward his household, toward his neighbors, toward his religion and all Muslims. To fulfill his commitment is to keep his appointment, pay his debt, respect his word, and let his commitment be what he spoke, not what was taken from him in writing, for writing is to preserve rights in this world, but "fulfilling" the commitment is a man's word that he stands by no matter what.

Then look at the word "fulfill"—fulfillment is a trait of the noble ones with living consciences, not those who betray and break faith. Whoever does not fulfill his commitment has betrayed and broken faith. Allah said "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts" (Al-Ma'idah 1). Commitments are more general than contracts. A commitment is in every obligation that a Muslim commits to, and a contract is primarily in his obligations in financial matters. A contract may be interpreted as a commitment, but not in the sense of correspondence, rather linguistic expansion, as Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned in *Zad al-Ma'ad*, that the highest contract is the contract between the Muslim and Allah that he commits to monotheism and supports the religion.

Adhering to commitments and promises is not left to the servant's will, but he is responsible for it, either in this world if rights are attached to it, and in the Hereafter if it involves honor or chivalry. Notice that Allah made the commitment responsible, though the holder of the commitment is the one who will be asked about it, which is from beautiful rhetoric and manipulation in speech, meaning that the one who breaks the commitment will be asked about it.

"And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with an even balance. That is the best [way] and best in result."

Fulfilling the measure and weighing with the correct scale... two matters that the hasty might see as one thing, but it is the most refined expressive precision to the utmost limits. A person might fulfill the measure by measuring five sa's, but what benefit is there if the measure itself is not controlled by the correct standard, so the matter returns to not fulfilling!

Measuring and weighing do not only apply to buying and selling matters, but they are, once again, beautiful metaphor that includes every judgment with right for one person over another first, then using the correct legal ruling in issuing that judgment. The correct scale is only in what the Sharia has ruled in every field. In inheritance, leasing, preventing usury and circumventing it like *'inah*, uncertainty and ignorance, imposing human laws on people's necks to walk despite their noses on other than the correct scale... that is from losing the balance "And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance" (Ar-Rahman 9).

The legislator's use here of the expressions of weighing and measuring, though it came specifically with the words of selling, is general in every weighing and justice, at the level of the entire Sharia. The fundamentalists may differ here in the matter of which of the two meanings is the original usage and which is the secondary usage. Here the discussion lengthens and goes beyond the framework of what we intended.

"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned."

This is a wonderful general guidance that protects the self, the group, and the nation from opinion climbers and the ignorant of the time. Protecting the self is that a person's speech be based on knowledge when he knows that his speech is calculated against him, hearing, sight, and heart, so he does not speak about what he saw or heard, or what occurred to his heart regarding others until he is certain of the correctness of what he says. The expression "that of which you have no knowledge" means investigation as well as reporting. Following, or pursuing in Arabic, is tracking the trace. There is no tracking of a trace except for a purpose, and according to the correctness of the purpose, accuracy of tracking, and comprehensiveness of knowledge, there will be accountability for what was heard, seen, and felt.

Many people fall into this matter, calling it forecasting events, without addressing them from every angle, hearing, sight, and thought. So you find him mixing, interpreting, and turning concepts upside down... that is the one responsible for pursuing what he has no knowledge of, especially when the matter is dependent on an awaited unseen, which no human being can know.

"And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth [apart], and you will never reach the mountains in height."

Then the scene returns to another character trait related to speaking without certain knowledge: pride and arrogance. I swear by Allah, I have not seen anyone in the half-century I spent working in the Islamic movement who pursues what he has no knowledge of except that it was coupled with false pride and arrogance. They are inseparable.

Walking on earth exultantly is an expression of pride and self-satisfaction with what one has gained of acceptance or appreciated work, forgetting or pretending to forget that without Allah's help and the preparation of means by people, these people would be forgotten and neglected. Listen to Allah's saying to Qarun, the owner of excessive wealth: "Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant. But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; but do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters" (Al-Qasas 76-77). The character of the wealthy luxurious ones who corrupt on earth and do not reform. Not exulting here is not opposite to sadness, but opposite to humility before Allah and people. Allah followed His advice to Qarun and those like him with the right path, which is balanced equilibrium between this world and its lawful pleasures, and the Hereafter and striving for it with faith.

Allah expressed by saying "and do not forget" indicating that the matter of this world is smaller in the heart and consideration, until Allah needed to remind the righteous servant of it.

The one impressed with himself, happy with what he has been given, does not see the smallness of what is in his hands compared to Allah's creation, not in the vast universe, but on the earth that he thinks he is its master! He will not tear through that earth with what he has been given of strength... except holes he looks through, not called tearing, and will not be. Just as he will not reach the mountains in height to be proud over the creation around him. He is a creature among creatures who gets sick as they get sick, weakens as they weaken, ages as they age, then dies as they die, without the slightest difference! So why the pride, happiness, vanity, and arrogance? What is their foundation and pillars? Except the delusion of minds and the whispers of devils.

"All that - its evil is ever, in the sight of your Lord, detested."

The apparent here is that "its evil" means its evils, so everything He forbade in that unique bouquet of moral guidances is from the evils that Allah dislikes, and they are at the level of prohibition. It was said that the description here falls on the last two prohibitions, which are not pursuing without knowledge and not walking on earth exultantly and proudly. But we see that every prohibition that preceded enters into that description, for generality is more appropriate.

"That is from what your Lord has revealed to you of wisdom."

Allah called those verses and guidances wisdom, and by Allah they are pure wisdom that comes only from One who is Expert, All-Knowing, Wise, who knows what He created and knows what is good for him and reforms him. These precious wisdoms are a favor from Allah, brought by the revelation sent down to Muhammad ﷺ to follow it and teach his nation and all humanity with the abundant good in it.

"And do not make with Allah another deity, lest you be thrown into Hell, blamed and banished."

Then the Quranic revelation returns to emphasize the great truth from which those commands and prohibitions emanate, and which began those luminous guidances: monotheism and worshipping Allah alone without partner. The consequence of other than that is to be "censured and forsaken," then "blamed and banished." The blame here comes from the polytheist's own soul, blaming himself: "He will say, 'Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way'" (Al-Furqan 27). And banishment is disgraceful defeat, for the polytheist was defeated in the greatest battle, despite the ease of victory in it, by holding fast to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

How great are these wisdoms that began with the call to monotheism and ended with emphasis on monotheism.

(2) The Bouquet of Surat Al-Hujurat

In this living Quranic educational scene, in the new bouquet of moral guidances, we encounter a living scene from the era of prophethood, mentioned in Surat Al-Hujurat. It is a scene that shows an authentic aspect of monotheism and connects it with character refined by sound Quranic education, showing it in its most sublime form: dealing with the master of creation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Then the Quran turns to the danger of listening to rumors, then talks about reconciliation between believers and evaluating the firm relationship between them through good and pleasant speech, and assuming the best in believers.

A comprehensive, complete bouquet that guides to what is most upright.

"O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allah and His Messenger but fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing. O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah - they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward. Indeed, those who call you, [O Muhammad], from behind the chambers - most of them do not understand. And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful. And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty, but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance, and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] bounty from Allah and favor. And Allah is Knowing and Wise. And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between them. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy. O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they are better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they are better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumptions are sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful."

Let us begin, by Allah's permission:

"O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allah and His Messenger but fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing."

The matter of putting oneself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ is a great matter that reaches a decisive boundary between Islam and disbelief. The reason for the verse's revelation, as mentioned in Al-Tabari: "Ibn Abd al-A'la narrated to us, he said: Ibn Thawr narrated to us, from

Ma'mar, from Qatadah, he said: Some people used to say: 'If only it were revealed about such and such, if only it were revealed about such and such.' And Al-Hasan said: They are people who slaughtered before the Prophet ﷺ prayed, so the Prophet ﷺ commanded them to repeat the slaughter." Similar statements came with the same meaning, that they are commanded "do not say contrary to the Book and Sunnah" as narrated from Ali ibn Abi Talhah, from Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him.

Putting oneself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ means that the Muslim should not follow his desires and precede with a statement or opinion until he knows what the Sharia says about it, from the Book or authentic Sunnah.

Many are the forms of putting oneself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ:

The one with interpretation who puts reason before transmitted text and claims that Islam agrees with reason—which is what his reason brought—puts himself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

The one with esoteric Sufi polytheistic interpretation who claims that the Quran has an apparent and hidden meaning, and that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to the common people with the apparent and left the hidden for the elite, or that people can take intermediaries to Allah from those they claim are His saints, or that they can supplicate to them directly, puts himself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

The one with Rafidhi polytheistic innovation who claims the innovation of seven or twelve imams, the last of whom is hidden, and that they know the unseen and know when they will die, indeed they only die by their consent, then goes to curse those whom Allah praised by being pleased with them and the correctness of their pledge to His Messenger ﷺ with the most vile and obscene abuse, puts himself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

The scholar of the ruler or scholar of Satan who manipulates Allah's verses, interpreting them according to what is needed to improve his ruler's image or justify his crimes and indecencies, puts himself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

The legislator or judge who legislates or judges by other than what Allah has revealed and takes human laws as a followed, imposed doctrine among his people, puts himself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

These are all disbelieving forms of putting oneself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

Then whoever commits sin and abandons the Sunnah puts himself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ naturally, as he put his desire or doubt before what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ commanded him. But this type does not remove one from the faith, rather its owner is a transgressor of desire or an innovator of doubt.

Let the Muslim be cautious of what he says or does, and let him present it to the Sharia before he says or does, so that he does not fall under the scope of those verses of severe impact on those

who depart from the Sharia. Rather, the Muslim should fear Allah and be afraid of His threat, for Allah hears what he says "Hearing," knows what he does "Knowing," not an atom in the heavens or earth is hidden from Him, glory be to Him.

Then the Quran moves to the status of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ alone, after forbidding putting oneself before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. Our Lord forbade people around the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from raising their voices above his noble voice or speaking to him loudly, as they speak to each other. In this is the utmost respect and elevation of status befitting the majesty of the master of messengers, the imam of the sent ones, and the mercy to the worlds ﷺ. This action, though it may seem small, nullifies all deeds... the Muslim does much good, then he is rude to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and suddenly his deed is nullified and his reward is lost, while he does not realize!

In this last warning there are many great meanings, including not considering sin small even if it seems small to you, and that the status of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is not like the status of any human being, whoever he may be, not Al-Hussein, may Allah be pleased with him, or others as the vile Rafidha claim, and that deeds may be nullified without the Muslim realizing it, so he continues to believe he is on his old covenant and straight path, while the poor one does not realize he has already lost his credit with Allah: "Those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work" (Al-Kahf 104).

And that if merely raising the voice above his voice ﷺ nullifies deeds, what about doing the act of putting oneself before him and putting oneself above him ﷺ.

"Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah - they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward."

Lowering the voice before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is an indication of the highest status that he ﷺ should be treated with in his life and after his death. Lowering the voice is less than raising the eye and opinion above what he said and established. Lowering the voice with him ﷺ is a test of what is in the believer's heart of love, honor, respect, and appreciation for him ﷺ, and listening to his words and not putting opinion and desire before what is established from him ﷺ is a greater test from Allah, indeed it is the greatest test that distinguishes, at its highest degrees, between Islam and disbelief, when putting opinion becomes rejection of what he said.

These successful ones in that test are the people of righteousness. The people of righteousness are those who deserve Allah's forgiveness and His favor, and great reward and generous recompense are written for them: gardens beneath which rivers flow, dwelling therein eternally, favor from their Lord and blessing.

"Indeed, those who call you, [O Muhammad], from behind the chambers - most of them do not understand. And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

The reason for the revelation of this verse, as in Al-Tabari, is that a group of Bedouins who had not yet been refined by religion came to the house of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and called him from outside his house with a loud voice: "O Muhammad, come out to us." This hurt the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so the verse was revealed, not just to rebuke them, but describing them as they deserve: that they do not understand.

These people indeed have no intellect, meaning the sound nature that refuses to take a person out of sound behavior at first glance. There is no need here for legislation, but it is nature and simple intellectual awareness, which Allah described those who did that deed as lacking.

In this is another subtlety: it is permissible to call those who come with statements or actions contrary to the Sunnah or nature as not understanding, or crazy, or the like, for Allah has described some people with this without prior warning to them, because the act itself carries indication of its doer's quality. But you find people of cold piety reproach you for speaking such words about one who distorts a Sunnah, or, worse, gives fatwa without any knowledge at all.

Another subtlety comes in the completion of the verse: their interest was in following sound nature and noble character. If they had been patient until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came out to them, it would have been good and better for them. Likewise, if people followed his Sunnah ﷺ, their interests would be achieved and they would gain the good of this world and the Hereafter. But deviation in natures and breaking away from Sunnahs never bring good.

The third subtlety is that Allah knows that these Bedouins are ignorant and do not understand, even though they are Muslims. So they had an excuse, and He encompassed them with mercy and forgiveness for their ignorance after the rebuke.

These subtleties are good jurisprudence in Allah's verses that the Muslim should contemplate and inhale the fragrances of their perfume in his soul and action.

The Quran moves to another direction that touches Islamic individual and collective character most precisely and closely.

"O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful."

The revelation of the verse was concerning the charity of Banu al-Mustaliq. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had sent a delegation to them that included Al-Walid ibn Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt. When the delegation was halfway there, the people came out to meet the delegation of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ welcomingly. But Al-Walid thought ill of them and returned to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ claiming their apostasy and that they only came out to kill them. When Allah informed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of the truth, these verses were revealed warning believers against listening to everyone who spreads a statement without verifying the truthfulness and reliability of the narrator.

Allah has established in this verse the best way to deal with what a transgressor or unknown person brings, especially if it contains what brings harm to others. Verification here is a legal necessity, since acting on mere hearing contains clear injustice to those harmed by such haste in spreading unverified statements.

In our time, how many wicked statements we see spread like wildfire, by which human devils harm peoples, whether by falsely accusing them or by interpreting their speech and putting it out of context. The result is the same: harming the subject of rumors and regret without benefit from those who did such a deed.

Notice, may Allah protect you, that Allah here does not address the transgressor, the troublemaker and liar, in His saying "and become, over what you have done, regretful," for this transgressor usually has the habit established in him with no escape from its evil. But the speech is directed to the listener to the transgressor, who is the sincere believer, not careful about what he hears, and he is the one who regrets that listening and harm.

"And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would be in difficulty, but Allah has endeared to you the faith and has made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, defiance, and disobedience. Those are the [rightly] guided. [It is] bounty from Allah and favor. And Allah is Knowing and Wise."

This knowledge remains with us until the Day of Judgment. Though it was originally directed to the noble Companions because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was among them, he is among us ﷺ through his Sunnah, biography, and behavior, in word, deed, and approval.

If the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his lifetime had listened to what some around him said according to their opinion, wars, bloodshed, and fighting would have resulted. But the Messenger ﷺ did not do that, so he turned away hardship from you, and instead gave you love of faith and made it light in your hearts guiding you to the straight path by following the beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In contrast, He made disbelief, transgression, and disobedience hateful to you, O community of believers. These are all colors of disbelief, slander, injustice, transgression, debauchery, and disobedience to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ in any form. Whoever has this quality, Allah has described them as the rightly guided—those who have reached human maturity in its most complete form... those are the unique generation of Companions, then those who followed them on their path and walked in their guidance among those who came after them.

What Allah has bestowed upon you is not from your work, but pure favor from Allah and His mercy and blessing upon you from what He knew of your good intention and reaching maturity. Allah knows what is in your hearts of love for faith, and His choice of you for favor and blessing is only for wisdom from Him that only He knows, for He is the All-Knowing, the Wise.

"And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between them. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then

make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."

Then Allah changes the moral scene from dealing with a transgressor's slander to dealing with fitna between two groups of Muslims.

Muslims are human beings, no matter what they are and what sublime horizons they have reached. The causes of fighting among humans are many and varied. Satan has countless tricks and methods he uses to bring enmity between brothers in faith, even though each of them sees that he is on the truth and his statement is correct.

But let us pause for moments at this fighting before we reach what Allah wanted of reconciliation between them. This matter is thorny and complex, despite its apparent simplicity and spontaneity.

Reconciliation is better—yes, it is Allah's statement in Surat An-Nisa. Reconciliation is conducted by a just arbitrator independent of the two disputing parties, for an opponent cannot be a proper judge. He studies the cause of the fighting, then shows each faction the other's perspective. The fighters must submit to this arbitration and comply with the arbitrator's opinion. Only through this submission does the shedding of forbidden blood stop.

This submission requires each faction to have the readiness to accept the truth, understand from Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, and avoid arrogance, making excuses, or stubborn denial of rights. If this is facilitated and the disagreeing becomes agreeing, the opposing becomes approving, they are transformed by Allah's blessing into brothers.

But what confuses this is Satan playing with the minds of those responsible for one of the two factions, so they reject the arbitrator's ruling, either for followed desire from personal interest, domination and love of controlling others' resources, or whatever reasons you want. It is assumed that the arbitrator has clarified who is right and who is wrong, or clarified the reason for disagreement due to multiple opinions and their complexity. But he, in the end, presented what should be.

If a faction rejects what the arbitrator clarified for the reasons we mentioned and does not stop fighting the other faction, then all believers must fight that transgressing faction that rejected compliance with the arbitrator's ruling, which is a ruling derived from Allah's Book and His Messenger's Sunnah ﷺ.

But transgression here must be defined correctly, without ignorance or desire. This falls on the entire Muslim community, not its two fighting parts. So the arbitrator should be from other than them both, without disagreement.

How many factions have transgressed and prevailed while on falsehood, due to the absence of the restraining Muslim force representing the nation, which Allah addressed as a "third party" in the verses "make settlement between them" and "fight against the one that oppresses."

There is, then, a third party that determines how reconciliation should be conducted and its conditions, reconciling what is possible, otherwise the third party fights with the oppressed faction against the oppressing faction.

This is the reason for what we see of division, fragmentation, fighting, and refusal to arbitrate and submit to the ruling of the third party, due to its absence, and the lack of faith of the fighting factions, for not submitting to an arbitrator from the mother community, even if he or the mother community does not have the power to uphold the truth and fight the transgressors.

That is the root of the problem...

Allah commanded that comprehensive third party to fight the transgressor until it returns to accepting the truth that was established in the arbitration, or is completely destroyed. The existence of such a faction is destructive to the entire nation if it does not return to Allah's command.

The evidence here that the transgressing faction described in these specific verses is still Muslim is Allah's saying "among the believers," then His saying in the following verse "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers," describing them as Muslims during their fighting together, which is a description that nothing came to change in the case of the third party representing the nation fighting the transgressing faction. If the fighting is settled and the transgressors submit, remember that they are among your believing brothers and treat them with justice as brothers, not as enemies.

"O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they are better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they are better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers."

Then the Quran moves to another aspect of moral corruption, warning believers among themselves against it with the strongest warning, whether on the individual or collective level, or between men or between women: that despicable mockery built on false arrogance, alleged pride, lying, bad intention, evil soul, degraded origin, and feeling of weakness. These are the worst qualities that a creature claiming humanity can have.

The moral and existential value standard for humans cannot be considered by those who have these defects. You see people mocking people based on racism, color, gender, or money, as whites do to blacks, or Gulf Arabs to migrant workers... Perhaps these mockers are lower in degrees than the others, and usually they are.

"Perhaps" here is not for doubt but for emphasis, as in Allah's saying in Surat Al-A'raf: "He said, 'Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and grant you succession in the land and see how you will do'" (129), for the mocker is not right except in certain cases we will discuss later.

"People" here may also refer to men, in terms of contrasting them with women, warning them against mocking their sisters, which is more widespread among women for some reason!

Just as Allah forbade mockery of others, He forbade stabbing and fault-finding, which is mentioning defects in a subtle way, as if unintended, which is worse and more malicious than apparent mockery. Similarly, attributing shameful nicknames known for evil and indecency, which were originally placed for humiliation and belittlement. Such actions move the doer from the rank of believer to the rank of transgressor. How miserable and wretched is this destination.

All this warning and threat is, as we mentioned, among believers. This does not apply in the case of calling the transgressor a transgressor, the debauched debauched, the adulterer an adulterer, and the innovator an innovator. This is not from that. That is confusing the papers! That is accusation of what is not proven, while what is proven is humiliating the disobedient, transgressing, debauched, adulterous innovators. It is also identifying them and repelling from their actions, and warning against following them. Whoever confuses the papers and shows cold piety in this matter has gone astray and led others astray.

Then the door of repentance is open for whoever does this, as it is open for every sinner who returns to Allah.

"O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumptions are sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful."

Then the Quran takes us to a new moral charge that elevates the soul to higher values and excellent behaviors that guarantee the health of societies and protection of individuals.

The first of these qualities in this bouquet is avoiding assumption. Assumption comes in the Quran with two meanings: first, lack of certainty, as in this verse and as in His saying in Surat Al-Jathiyah: "We assume only assumption, and we are not certain" (32). Second, assumption meaning certainty, as in His saying in Surat Al-Kahf: "And the criminals will see the Fire and will assume that they are to fall into it" (53). So assumption is assumption of truth and assumption of falsehood.

False assumption is the blameworthy assumption, where there is no evidence for it except doubts or desires.

We notice a subtlety here: Allah did not make all assumption sinful. This is because, for most people, this assumption has some basis that may prove true, but Allah forbade much assumption, since the remaining verified portion is unclear and unknown, and the apparent ruling in Sharia is for the overwhelming majority.

Then He forbade a despicable vice: spying on others for any reason, especially as this occurs frequently in households where one spouse suspects the other of evil and spies, with dire consequences. Or spying between business partners or friends—all this is shameful and

humiliating, whatever the spy claims. Indeed, the Sunnah prevented spying on people inside their homes, even if it is known that sin is being committed, as long as it is not apparent and public, and the doors are closed! To this extent Islam respects and protects individual freedom within its limits.

As for spying on the community for the benefit of an enemy, this matter returns to loyalty and disavowal, and the specifics of monotheism. The proven spy's punishment is death, with disagreement about apostasy depending on the spy's condition.

Another vice no less, indeed may exceed its predecessors: backbiting, meaning mentioning a person with what he dislikes, whether he has what was mentioned or not. It is counted by all scholars as one of the major sins itself. In a hadith from Muslim from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do you know what backbiting is?" They said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: "Mentioning your brother with what he dislikes." It was said: "What if what I say about my brother is true?" He said: "If what you say about him is true, you have backbitten him, and if it is not true, you have slandered him." So the person is then between backbiting and slander!

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave the most abhorrent example for backbiting: eating one's dead brother's flesh, not alive. In this is the utmost emphasis on the reprehensible deed. Eating live flesh might be palatable to someone who finds it palatable, despite its abhorrence, but eating dead human flesh—there is no soul more degraded or lower than that soul that would accept it. This is what every chaste soul hates, indeed despises with hatred.

Then Allah concludes this noble bouquet from Surat Al-Hujurat with the greatest advice for all Muslims: fear Allah. Fear Allah because He sees what is in your chests and what your tongues speak secretly and openly. Fear Allah because not an atom's weight in the heavens or earth escapes Him. Fear Allah because His justice is firm, His reckoning is established, and His punishment is lasting.

Taqwa (God-consciousness) is the sum of good character. It is what prevents the Muslim from doing ugly deeds and drives him to do praiseworthy deeds.

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